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CANADA'S PLACE ON THE TEAM

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I am not an exponent of the game of football, so must stay away, to some extent, from too close comparisons with it in the present panel discussion. We are, however, an all-star team, drawn from state, provincial and two federal agencies, as well as some private agencies, and we have suffered from the lack of team practice that plagues all such teams. But we have been at this some time now, and we should be improving our teamwork. We should be prepared to forego personal high-score ambitions, prima donna notions and local jealousies. We must be prepared to examine what is best for the team and the continental population it represents, and then play our parts to the full.

When I speak of the Canadian part in the International Team, it must be borne in mind that Canada has two jurisdictions—provincial and federal, just as the United States has both state and federal authorities. It is difficult for me to speak for the provinces. They have their own needs and problems and are full partners in the game. However, I shall attempt to portray the situation as I see it, and to point up in general terms the place we Canadians can fill.

Let us first examine the objectives of the International Team. Our

purpose in waterfowl management is to perpetuate the sport of waterfowling, at the highest practical level, for all our people for all time. Within this general scheme there will of course be local or regional needs; necessarily therefore there must be local priorities and peculiarities to take into account in the work to be done. Thus in the United States distribution of birds from northern breeding grounds to the various states is of paramount importance. Numbers of birds available must be known, in order that the harvest may be proper and equitable. Data on harvesting are a "must." Development of wintering and migration refuges is important. Increase of local breeding populations is highly desirable to meet the needs of increasing human populations, as well as to ameliorate losses to the duck population when drought hits the breeding grounds in the north central United States and the southern areas of the Prairie Provinces.

In Canada the immediate priorities are somewhat different. Certainly we are keenly interested in distribution of birds from the breeding grounds, especially from the northern areas. Kill statistics are very important. Development (or improvement) of breeding habitat in some sections of the East is desirable. Generally speaking, however, when we have plenty of waterfowl we do not need an exact census of their numbers; it is enough to know their relative abundance from year to year. We do not at present, in the west at least, need to develop refuges for migrating birds or to protect their breeding grounds. We are, however, very much concerned as to what the picture will be if drought conditions such as we had in the 30's should again occur. We need to know what management procedures would ensure some hunting, or at least maintain adequate brood stocks, in that event, and what refuges should be established to help the waterfowl to survive another long drought. We need to foresee what our policies will be when our human population has doubled—at which time pressures from the south of the line will be intense. We need to know much about individual waterfowl species, against the day when management will reach the level of differential regulation and harvest by species, and when pressure of agriculture may make it impossible to manage all waterfowl as a unified resource. We need to know very much about our northern areas and the waterfowl raised thereon. We cannot be complacent about the present, but our gravest concern is for the future.

In order that you may more clearly appreciate the Canadian picture, I shall outline briefly the areas of responsibility allotted to provincial and federal wildlife agencies. The British North America Act, by which Canada was created in 1867, made no specific mention of wildlife, but it did allocate certain responsibilities to Provincial

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Governments and others to the Federal Government. To some extent the basis of division was separation of things of local importance from those of national importance. Natural resources generally have been recognized as being local, and their management is a provincial responsibility. Thus by mutual acceptance wildlife has been deemed a provincial concern. Crown lands, upon which much of the wildlife is found, are with minor exceptions held in the right of the Provinces.

By the terms of the British North America Act, however, matters which are the subject of international treaty are handled by the Federal Government. Therefore the Migratory Birds Treaty of 1916 brings waterfowl within the administrative responsibility of the Federal Government. You will see the apparent anomaly that this creates: migratory birds are a federal concern, but they are the property of the Crown in the right of the Province in which they may at any time reside. Thus their management might be construed as a provincial responsibility. This difficulty must be solved in the not-too-distant future, as active management will become increasingly necessary in the face of increasing human populations. In present practice, however, things work out pretty well, with all agencies cooperating and meeting in conference to settle matters of regulation, including seasons, bags, etc. The Act and Regulations are federal, but changes in them are made only by federal-provincial agreement.

How then can Canada best fit into the team? We encompass within our borders the major portion of the breeding grounds for both ducks and geese. Our principal contribution must be to maintain these for posterity. There can be little hope for increasing the present waterfowl populations in the Prairie Provinces, in fact we must find solutions to some problems of local overpopulation; but there should be hope for increased production in some areas of the East. All along the line we must fight impractical and nonessential drainage, to protect those breeding grounds we have; we must scrutinize all developments in land use to ensure that wildlife has its proper place in the multiple land use picture. We must take thought for the vagaries of the future, and plan for bad times as well as good, so that our waterfowl may have the opportunity to "bounce back" from depression. We must recognize our inter-dependence with our neighbours to the South, and we must reflect just consideration for them in our regulations and in our research and management.

I do not propose to dwell upon the provincial place in the team. We recognize, however, that provincial wildlife agencies deal with sportsmen, regulations, enforcement, and hunting licenses. Therefore they need waterfowl population statistics, kill statistics and management programs. It is proper that they should have a share in the

surveys made to obtain data on which to base regulations, and in the banding and bag checking from which we derive kill statistics. In the light of the basic Canadian policy that management of resources is a provincial concern, I would suggest that land manipulation, a primary requirement of waterfowl management, might be considered a provincial responsibility.

Administration of the regulations for the control of crop damage was transferred to the provinces in 1953. It may be that further delegation of authority in waterfowl management may be desirable, to the extent permitted by the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

The Canadian Wildlife Service, as federal agent in the picture, is charged with over-all administration of the migratory bird laws, and is responsible for co-ordinating activities among Provinces and between Provinces and the United States. This responsibility is inherent in our Constitution, and is most beneficial when exercised in a sympathetic and democratic fashion. The Service also has a responsibility to the Provinces for undertaking those researches essential for adequate waterfowl management, by land manipulation and by regulation. International liaison is without doubt a federal function. Handling public relations and developing public understanding of wildlife policies will always be an important task.

In the light of the foregoing comments, then, what place in the team can the Canadian Wildlife Service best fill? Probably it is in research and planning, or to retain the football analogy, in coaching and quarterbacking. I noticed in a recent magazine where Mr. Jim Kimball, Director of Game and Fish for Minnesota, quoted an article explaining the numerous mergers of small and medium-sized companies into single great industries. It was stated that the reason for the mergers is not primarily to increase buying power and sales staffs, but rather to be able to afford the best research staff and facilities; if the companies cannot keep pace in research they will before long be out of business. We believe that the same applies to the big business of wildlife management, and specifically here in waterfowl management. We do not underestimate our needs in management; in fact these are essential to both present and future wildfowling, but our research must keep pace or we shall find ourselves always on the defensive.

Why is the research field so appropriate to the functions of the Canadian Wildlife Service? The major breeding grounds lie in Canada, and much of the future of wildfowling must rest with them. Research at best is difficult to sell to the public; when that research lies beyond local or national political boundaries it is difficult to argue in defense of it. Yet the results and the interpretation of

research are not of merely local import, but are applicable nationally or universally. Thus a Canadian federal service, whose field force is constituted entirely of men trained in biology, zoology and wildlife management, appears to be admirably suited to conduct wildlife research in Canada. Conversely, since that group is small, it is inefficient to dissipate its energies in duties of management and survey which for the most part, beyond certain research phases, can be made routine. Some part of the research necessarily should be directed to improvement of survey, but a substantial portion should be aimed at the future, when the problems of waterfowl management may be expected to become painfully acute if not overpowering.

It is not proposed to deal here with types of research or relative priorities. These can be left to more detailed discussion around conference tables. But if we accept the thesis that more research is essential to the ultimate survival of the sport of wildfowling, we may ask what is implied by the division of labor I am suggesting. It would mean that the federal authority (in Canada) must be prepared to make regulations for seasons and bags on the basis of information provided almost exclusively by other agencies. To the Canadian Provinces, it could mean a heavier commitment in terms of money and men to assist in waterfowl surveys and management. To both the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the individual states it could mean a slightly heavier commitment in terms of foreign travel for survey and banding. It would also mean acceptance of more Canadian research data, increasing as time goes on, for purposes of more intensive waterfowl management. (I should like to state here that all agencies should undertake some research, in order to have that cross-check of findings which is essential to healthy research.)

The division of duties as outlined leaves one major problem untouched—the providing of a refuge system in Canada that can swing into action, as required, to assist in maintaining waterfowl hunting for sportsmen throughout the continent. At the present time Ducks Unlimited (Canada) is the only agency active in the field of land manipulation for waterfowl. The problem is complicated by the present Canadian federal policy of remaining aloof from land management; by the relatively low human population density of our Provinces (especially the Prairie Provinces), which creates serious difficulties in the financing of projects; and by the fact that most of the hunters are south of the International Boundary. I shall not attempt to point up a solution here, since the problem involves legislative rights and responsibilities. But further development of public understanding and consequent effective legislative action must take place soon if the problem is to be squarely met.

In summary then, I would suggest that, because of present constitutional limitations and the basic philosophy relating thereto in Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service can make its best contribution to the team in the backfield and in the clubhouse, by using its staff of wildlife biologists for applied and fundamental research directed towards present and future needs, and by helping to plan. Provincial wildlife agencies, which have the actual task of licensing and regulating hunting, will probably have to assist in carrying the burden of survey and land management. Canada as a whole, as custodian of the greater part of the continental waterfowl breeding grounds, has a responsibility to the sportsmen of the North American Continent extending beyond national or provincial boundaries.

My one direct association with football, back in collegiate days, is memorable for two reasons. For one thing, I played the entire game out as end, without any pads! More important, however, is the fact that we won the game overwhelmingly. We here are an international group playing against a big-name team we are wont to call Progress. Our task is to see that we have the team members, the know-how and the equipment to assure victory—we need lots of plans and pads. We cannot afford to take chances here, where we are playing a game for keeps. Victory means perpetuation of waterfowling, as we know it, at some reasonable level; defeat means at the least the end of public waterfowl hunting, and may mean no waterfowl hunting at all. My team did win that game handily back those many years ago, and my bruises were rather quickly recovered from. I do not mind a few bruises in a good cause, and I'm sure no one here does either, if we end up on the winning side. But let's play the game with the best of everything at our command; if we lose through lack of training, equipment, planning or teamwork, there will be no return match.

DISCUSSION

CHAIRMAN RUHL: I am sure that this is something that should provoke some discussion and, therefore, are there any questions?

MR. SETH GORDON [California]: I would just like to ask how this program of returning to the provinces the responsibility for the handling of the crop problem has worked out.

MR. MAIR: I would say that it has worked out excellently. We have had no problems whatsoever. We find that the provincial people are much closer to the problem, and thus they are more immediately aware of the problem.

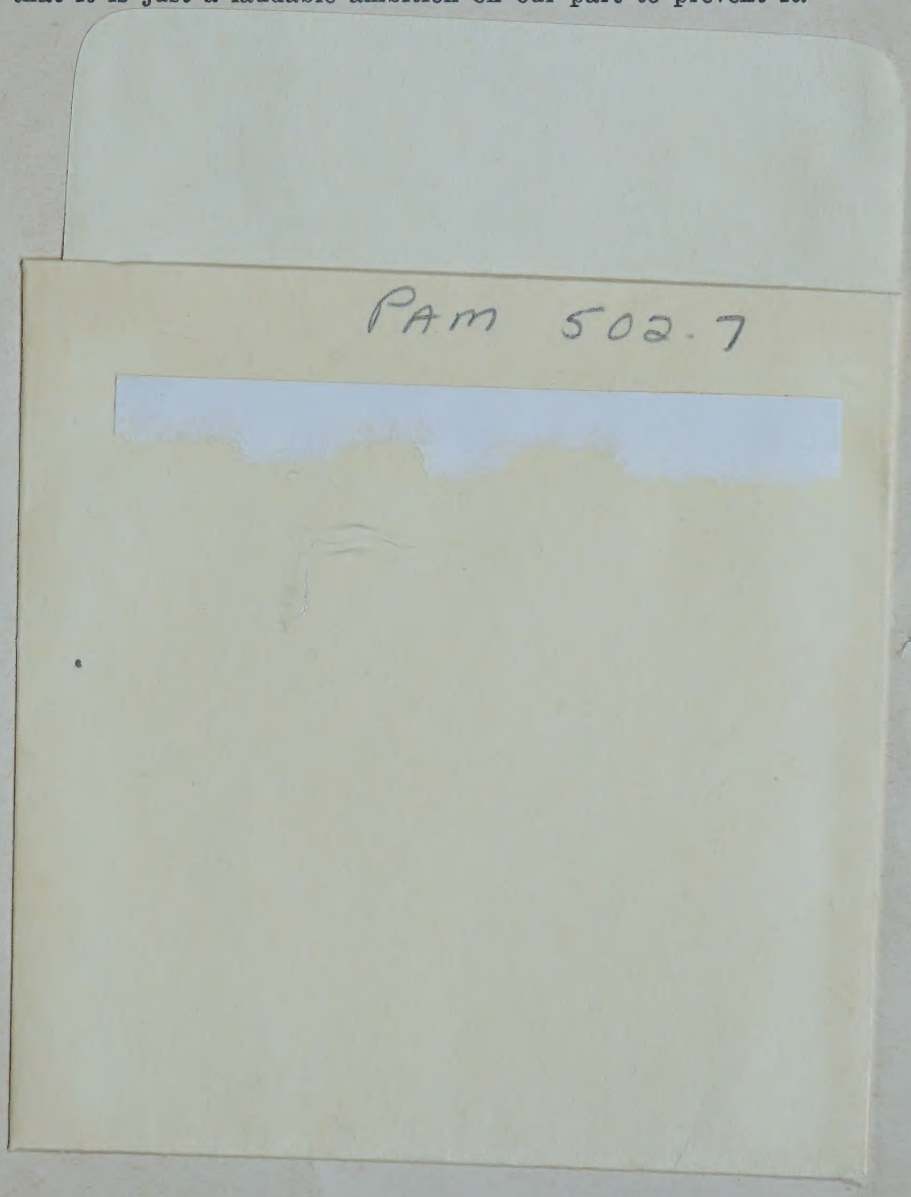
CHAIRMAN RUHL: Are there further questions?

VICE-CHAIRMAN KIMBALL: I do not propose to jump up every time, but I do have one question that I would like to ask of Mr. Mair.

I notice that you said that you felt that one of your responsibilities was to prevent unnecessary draining in the provinces. We also have a big problem in the states, and we feel that we are losing the wetland areas through drainage at the rate of about 3 per cent per year. Could you tell us if drainage is really serious

in the prairie provinces, in the duck producing area, and if so, is there anything that you can do about it?

MR. MAIR: I think that there are some people here who would be closer to the problem than I am. I think it is safe to say that it has not as yet become a major problem with us. I said that I felt that we had a responsibility to prevent this but I must confess that we have not found any way of preventing it as yet. We feel that it is just a laudable ambition on our part to prevent it.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